

~~ADMINISTRATIVE - INTERNAL USE ONLY~~

The Director of Central Intelligence  
Washington, D.C. 20505

28 February 1986

Senior Review Panel

TO: Hal Ford  
RE: Your 2/27/86 Draft

1. Very good - very useful - memo.
2. Re para 1-(4), glad to participate if you and Graham really wish. But inclined to think there would be advantage in keeping the draft an inside-NIC project.
3. You might wish to consider some further illustrations in para 6 to give the point wider range and a finale para 7 along some lines such as:

Para 6 (After sentence 3):

Alternatively, "This NIE is NIC-initiated and intended to support an Executive Branch re-examination of concessional aid to Ruritania." Or, "This NIE, initiated by NIO-Mitteleuropa, addresses altered Ruritanian prospects which may require an early review of US policy toward that country."

Para 7 (New)

7. These exercises have reductionist aims: (a) concentration of our estimative work on the essentials of the intelligence problems involved, (b) brevity.

4. Cheers.

ODCI/SRP/WmLeonhart:tb

Distribution:

Original - Addressee  
1 - SRP File  
1 - SRP Chrono  
1 - SRP (Amb. Leonhart)

*Bm*  
WmL

~~ADMINISTRATIVE - INTERNAL USE ONLY~~

ADMIN INTERNAL USE ONLY

Draft

27 February 1986

Bill - How does this strike  
you? Any suggested additions  
or subtractions? I wd. prefer to keep calling  
Key Questions "Key Questions," just because that's  
what the VIOs understand  
our intent to revolve around.  
Many thanks - Ted

NOTE FOR: The NIC/SRP

FROM: VCs/NIC

SUBJECT: On Concept Papers, Key Questions, and TORs

1. A few additional thoughts on these subjects--in the interests of  
(1) improving Concept Papers/TORs, (2) formalizing our discussions to  
date on these procedures, (3) agreeing on definitions, and (4)  
incorporating some useful suggestions given us by Bill Leonhart.

2. Key Questions, to be introduced at the close of each Concept  
Paper, are the central or pivotal issues involved in a given Estimate,  
the basic focus of that product's purpose and message. Were a crisis  
situation brewing in Ruritania, for example, Key Questions might be (1)  
the degree of likelihood that the King will be overthrown in the near  
future by thieves answerable to Princess Carlotta; (2) the likely  
cohesion, policies, orientation, and hold on the public of her successor

regime; and (3) the so-what for US interests.

3. Identification of these Key Questions is in itself a highly creative process that forces us to reduce issues to the fundamentals in our own mind. They should receive tentative answers at the TOR coordination meeting. Ultimately the Key Judgments should answer the Key Questions and represent the standard against which the paper is judged to have met its purpose or not.

4. In all Estimates, many important questions feed into such Key Questions, are subsumed in them, and must be dealt with in the research and analysis attending the Estimate's drafting. In the Ruritania case, typical important questions would include the political-military capabilities, intentions, and toughness/effectiveness of the major players; the influence on the situation of the precipitous fall of the zlotny (R.); the machinations of the Carlotta camp with the Vanlandingshams; the likely effect a Ghibelline raid upon neighboring Guelphia would have on the R. situation; etc.

5. Such important questions should be the framework about <sup>which</sup> ~~with~~ TORs are organized, drawn, and presented. TORs thus should list the principal important questions to be considered, with indicated sub-questions which

ADMIN INTERNAL USE ONLY

ADMIN INTERNAL USE ONLY

feed into each of the TOR's important questions, as appropriate. TORs are not to be an outline of the Estimate, or a table of contents. Nor does answering all the important questions of a paper necessarily mean that the Key Questions have been explicitly answered.

6. Additionally, Concept Papers should in all cases begin with an explanation of where the exercise came from, and what its purpose is. For example: "This SNIE was specially requested by Inspector Clouseau, to be completed fast-track. Building on the general purpose NIE on Ruritania of 1906, the present issue-oriented Estimate is being produced to help guide Amb. Terry Bascomb's upcoming special mission."

Hal Ford



STAT

Distribution:

All NIC Officers

SRP

C/NIC

ADMINISTRATIVE - INTERNAL USE ONLY

KEEP THESE NOTES ON FILE  
FOR FUTURE REFERENCE

---

NIC PRODUCTION NOTE - 19

---

PART I

14 January 1986

MAKING ESTIMATES MORE ISSUE-ORIENTED:  
INCLUSION OF "KEY QUESTIONS" IN CONCEPT PAPERS

1. In drawing up future concept Papers/TORs, we ask that you take great care from the outset to explicitly identify the few truly issue-oriented questions at hand in undertaking the Estimate. We would like to highlight these issues by instituting the use of "Key Questions" in each Concept Paper; this will serve to confine the focus of the exercise to examining those truly key questions. TORs in particular often end up as Christmas trees with everything hung on them. This needlessly complicates and prolongs drafting, and creates texts which end up too diffuse and sometimes overly duplicative of detailed work being done in DDI and other studies.

2. This also means that greater attention be given at the outset to what the future Key Judgments may look like. Not preconceptions set in concrete, but tentative central propositions which will be tested and changed by evidence and analysis. What will remain from such process, however, will be more assurance that the right questions have been addressed and that the issue-oriented purposes of the exercise will have been well served.

3. At the outset of certain broad Estimates we will be instituting informal discussions among a few relevant NIOs, to identify and agree upon what the handful of core issues are in these up-coming papers. In all cases, however, and whether or not your Estimates begin in this particular procedural fashion, please be rigorous in identifying the Key Questions in your Concept Papers/TORs. Confine those questions in most instances to no more than 3-5 issues. Relevant subordinate questions can of course be tucked under these, as appropriate, but in so policing Estimates from conception to birth we will end up with shorter, sharper, more issue-oriented Key Judgments -- those portions of our products which by far receive the greatest consumer attention.

ADMINISTRATIVE - INTERNAL USE ONLY

PART II

28 February 1986

ON CONCEPT PAPERS, KEY QUESTIONS, AND TORs

1. A few additional thoughts on these subjects--in the interests of (1) improving Concept Papers/TORs, (2) formalizing our discussions to date on these procedures, (3) agreeing on definitions, and (4) incorporating some useful suggestions given us by Bill Leonhart.

2. Key Questions, to be introduced at the close of each Concept Paper, are the central or pivotal issues involved in a given Estimate, the basic focus of that product's purpose and message. Were a crisis situation brewing in Ruritania, for example, Key Questions for a SNIE might be (1) the degree of likelihood that the King will be overthrown in the near future by thieves answerable to Princess Carlotta; (2) the likely cohesion, policies, orientation, and hold on the public of her successor regime; and (3) the so-what for US interests.

3. Identification of these Key Questions is in itself a highly creative process that forces us to reduce issues to the fundamentals in our own mind. They should receive tentative answers at the TOR coordination meeting. Ultimately the Key Judgments should answer the Key Questions and represent the standard against which the paper is judged to have met its purpose or not.

4. In all Estimates, many important questions feed into such Key Questions, are subsumed in them, and must be dealt with in the research and analysis attending the Estimate's drafting. In the Ruritanian case, typical important questions would include the political-military capabilities, intentions, and toughness/effectiveness of the major players; the influence on the situation of the precipitous fall of the zlotny (R.); the machinations of the Carlotta camp with the Vanlandingham; the likely effect a Ghibelline raid upon neighboring Guelphia would have on the R. situation; etc.

5. Such important questions should be the framework about which TORs are organized, drawn, and presented. TORs thus should list the principal important questions to be considered, with indicated sub-questions which feed into each of the TOR's important questions, as appropriate. TORs are not to be an outline of the Estimate, or a table of contents. Nor does answering all the important questions of a paper necessarily mean that the Key Questions have been explicitly answered.

ADMINISTRATIVE - INTERNAL USE ONLY

6. Additionally, Concept Papers should in all cases begin with an explanation of where the exercise came from, and what its purpose is. For example: "This SNIE was specially requested by Inspector Clouseau. Building on the previous (1906) general purpose NIE on Ruritania, the present issue-oriented Estimate is being produced to help guide Amb. Terry Bascomb's upcoming special mission." Or: "This SNIE, initiated by NIO-Mitteleuropa, is intended to support an upcoming Executive Branch re-examination of concessional aid to Ruritania."

7. In short, the chief aims of these exercises are: (a) concentration of our estimative work on the essentials of the problems involved, (b) clarity and sharpness of presentation/impact, and (c) brevity.

Hal Ford

ADMINISTRATIVE - INTERNAL USE ONLY

DATE: 15 JAN 1986 SRP

The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C. 20505

Amb. Boardman

Gen. McPherson

14 January 1986

Exec. Adm. Staff

The Dir. / Dir. /

Retain or Destroy

File

National Intelligence Council

MEMORANDUM FOR: NIC Officers

SUBJECT: Making Estimates More Issue-Oriented:  
Inclusion of "Key Questions" in Concept Papers

1. In drawing up future concept Papers/TORs, we ask that you take great care from the outset to explicitly identify the few truly issue-oriented questions at hand in undertaking the Estimate. We would like to highlight these issues by instituting the use of "Key Questions" in each Concept Paper; this will serve to confine the focus of the exercise to examining those truly key questions. TORs in particular often end up as Christmas trees with everything hung on them. This needlessly complicates and prolongs drafting, and creates texts which end up too diffuse and sometimes overly duplicative of detailed work being done in DDI and other studies.

2. This also means that greater attention be given at the outset to what the future Key Judgments may look like. Not preconceptions set in concrete, but tentative central propositions which will be tested and changed by evidence and analysis. What will remain from such process, however, will be more assurance that the right questions have been addressed and that the issue-oriented purposes of the exercise will have been well served.

3. At the outset of certain broad Estimates we will be instituting informal discussions among a few relevant NIOs, to identify and agree upon what the handful of core issues are in these up-coming papers. In all cases, however, and whether or not your Estimates begin in this particular procedural fashion, please be rigorous in identifying the Key Questions in your Concept Papers/TORs. Confine those questions in most instances to no more than 3-5 issues. Relevant subordinate questions can of course be tucked under these, as appropriate, but in so policing Estimates from conception to birth we will end up with shorter, sharper, more issue-oriented Key Judgments -- those portions of our products which by far receive the greatest consumer attention.

H. Ford

H. Fuller

Graham Fuller

1  
ADMINISTRATIVE - INTERNAL USE ONLY



ADMINISTRATIVE - INTERNAL USE ONLY

14 January 1986

SUBJECT: Making Estimates More Issue-Oriented:  
Inclusion of "Key Questions" in Concept Papers

DCI/NIC/H.Ford/G.Fuller:bha(14 Jan 85)

Distribution:

C/NIC

All NIOs, A/NIOs, AG'ers

PO/NIC

SRP

NIC Admin File

Ford Chrono

Fuller Chrono

2  
ADMINISTRATIVE - INTERNAL USE ONLY